

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims was submitted on March 18, 2004, will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of paperless product distribution comprising:

supporting an interactive computer network purchase session in which a remote customer places a product order with a retailer for purchase of one or more products and for delivery to the customer;

providing details of the product order to an independent local distributor; who is geographically local to the customer; ~~and~~

providing a receipt code from the retailer in a return computer network message to the customer;

initiating delivery of at least one of the ordered products from the independent local distributor to the customer; ~~and~~

providing the receipt code from the customer to the independent local distributor upon delivery; and

receiving confirming delivery of said one or more ordered products confirmation, wherein confirming delivery comprises: ~~comprising~~ the independent local distributor ~~return~~ returning of the receipt code at the retailer from the independent local distributor to the retailer; and the retailer making payment from the retailer to the independent local distributor for the delivery of said one or more ordered products to the customer upon the retailer verifying that the receipt code received from the independent local distributor is identical to the receipt code provided to the customer.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein supporting ~~an~~ the interactive computer network purchase session comprises maintaining an Internet web site through which the customer can place orders and make payment to the retailer.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein providing the details of the product order comprises sending a computer network message from the retailer to the

independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and the customer who ordered them.

4. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein initiating delivery comprises a request from the retailer to the independent local distributor for delivery of at least one of the ordered products to the customer.

5. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein receiving delivery confirmation comprises receipt by the retailer of a computer network message containing the receipt code provided by the retailer to the customer.

6. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein initiating delivery comprises communicating a bid for contracting delivery from one of a plurality of local distributors to the retailer.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the ~~local distributor's delivery~~ bid includes an election of delivery level of service.

8. (Original) A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the retailer requests only one local distributor to deliver the ordered product.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of paperless product distribution comprising:

receiving a product order at a retailer computer site from a remote customer, the product order comprising a communication message sent over an interactive computer network system from the customer to the retailer, in which the customer specifies one or more retailer products for purchase and delivery;

sending details of the product order from the retailer computer site to an independent local distributor, who is local to the customer, and sending a receipt code in a communication message over the computer network system from the retailer computer site to the customer; ~~and~~

providing the receipt code from the customer to the independent local distributor upon delivery; and

~~receiving confirming delivery of the product order to the customer confirmation at the retailer computer site, wherein the delivery confirmation~~confirming delivery comprises the independent local distributor return of~~returning the receipt code sent to the customer in a communication message that is received from the independent local distributor to the retailer and, in response, the retailer making payment from the retailer to the independent local distributor for the delivery of the product order to the customer upon the retailer verifying that the receipt code received from the independent local distributor is identical to the receipt code provided to the customer.~~

10. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the interactive computer network system over which the communication message is sent comprises ~~the~~ an Internet.

11. (Original) A method as defined in claim 9, wherein sending details of the product order comprises sending a computer network message to the independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and identifying the customer who ordered them, and requesting a bid from one or more local distributors for contracting delivery of the product order.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 9, further including wherein ~~initiating delivery comprises by~~ communicating a bid for contracting delivery from one of a plurality of local distributors to the retailer.

13. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 12, wherein the ~~local distributor's delivery~~ bid includes an election of delivery level of service.

14. (Original) A method as defined in claim 12, wherein the retailer requests only one local distributor to deliver the ordered product.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer system for a paperless product delivery system, the computer system comprising:

a retailer computer ~~at a retailer business site~~; and

a network communications interface between an interactive computer network system and the retailer computer;

wherein the retailer computer is able to: (1) ~~receives~~receive a product order from a remote customer, the product order comprising a communication message in which the customer specifies one or more retailer products for purchase and delivery, said communication message being sent over the interactive computer network system from the customer through the communication interface and to the retailer ~~business site~~computer, ~~in which the customer specifies one or more retailer products for purchase and delivery;~~ (2) ~~sends~~send details of the product order from the retailer computer to an independent local distributor, who is geographically local to the customer, and ~~sends~~send a receipt code in a communication message over the computer network system from the retailer computer through the communications interface to the customer, the receipt code being stored on said retailer computer, and (3) ~~receives delivery confirmation~~confirming delivery of said one or more retailer products, wherein ~~the delivery confirmation comprises~~is confirmed by: the customer sending return of the receipt code sent to the customer to the independent distributor and in a message that is received from the independent local distributor and, in response, the retailer initiates initiating payment to the independent distributor in response to the receipt code being received by the retailer from the independent distributor and said received receipt code being verified as being identical to the receipt code stored in said retailer computer.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim 15, wherein the interactive computer network system over which the communication message is sent comprises ~~the~~an Internet.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim 15, wherein the details of the product order comprise an e-mail message sent over ~~the~~an Internet to the independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and identifying the customer who ordered them.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim ~~15~~15, wherein ~~the delivery confirmation comprises~~is confirmed by a computer network message being received at the retailer computer, the message containing ~~a~~the receipt code, and the receipt code of the

message ~~is being~~ verified as being identical to the receipt code provided by the retailer computer to the customer.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim 15, wherein the retailer computer ~~sends~~ able to send the details of the product order by sending a computer network message to the independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and identifying the customer who ordered them, and requesting a bid from one or more local distributors for contracting delivery of the product order.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim 19, wherein the retailer computer ~~initiates~~ is able to initiate delivery after receiving ~~at the~~ bid for contracting delivery from one of a plurality of local distributors.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer system as defined in claim 19, wherein the ~~received~~ local distributor's delivery bid includes an election of delivery level of service.

22. (Original) A computer system as defined in claim 19, wherein the retailer requests only one local distributor to deliver the ordered product.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer system for a paperless product delivery system, the computer system comprising:

a customer computer for being used by a customer ~~at a customer location~~; and

a network communications interface between an interactive computer network system and the customer computer;

wherein the customer computer is able to: (1) ~~sends~~ send a product order to a business retailer computer at a remote location, the product order comprising a communication message sent over the interactive computer network system from the customer computer through the communications interface and to the business retailer computer, in which the customer specifies one or more retailer products for purchase and delivery, and (2) ~~receives~~ receive a receipt code in a communication message from the business retailer computer over the computer network system through the communications interface, thereby confirming to the customer that the business retailer computer has sent

details of the product order to an independent local distributor, ~~who is local to the customer, such that~~ and wherein the customer can provide the receipt code to the independent local distributor upon product delivery to the customer, ~~and wherein~~ the receipt code can be verified by the business retailer computer as being the identical receipt code sent to the customer, ~~such that~~ and wherein the business retailer computer can initiate payment processing to the independent local distributor upon the receipt code being verified by the business retailer computer.

24. (Currently amended) A computer system as defined in claim 23, wherein the interactive computer network system over which the communication message is sent comprises ~~the~~ an Internet.

25. (Currently amended) A computer system as defined in claim 23, wherein the details of the product order comprise a computer network message sent over ~~the~~ an Internet to the independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and identifying the customer who ordered them.

26. (Original) A computer system as defined in claim 23, wherein the delivery confirmation comprises a computer network message received at the retailer computer, the message containing a receipt code, and the receipt code of the message is verified as being identical to the receipt code provided by the retailer computer to the customer.

27. (Original) A computer system as defined in claim 23, wherein the customer computer specifies an election of delivery level of service for the customer product order.

28. (Withdrawn) A database stored in data storage of a retailer database computer, the database comprising:

a plurality of product orders each of which comprises an order from a customer to the retailer for purchase of one or more products to be delivered to the customer by an independent local distributor; and

a plurality of data records, each of which is linked to a product order of, each data record containing independent local distributor information that relates to the product order

and identifies an independent local distributor who is geographically local to the customer, and is associated with a receipt code that is provided to the customer over an interactive computer network system and then is returned to the retailer by the local distributor such that the provided receipt code for the product order can be retrieved from the database and compared to the sent receipt code, such that a match indicates that the local distributor received the receipt code from the customer upon delivery of the ordered products and is warranted payment for delivery.

29. (Withdrawn) A database as defined in claim 28, wherein the interactive computer network system over which the communication message is sent comprises the Internet.

30. (Withdrawn) A database as defined in claim 28, wherein the details of the product order comprise a computer network message sent over the Internet to the independent local distributor, listing the products ordered and identifying the customer who ordered them.

31. (Withdrawn) A database as defined in claim 28, wherein the delivery confirmation comprises a computer network message received at the retailer computer, the message containing a receipt code, and the receipt code of the message is verified as being identical to the receipt code provided by the retailer computer to the customer.

32. (Withdrawn) A database as defined in claim 28, wherein the product order information includes a specification of delivery level of service for the customer product order.